



IDUNA,

QUEEN OF KENT;

OR,

THE DRUID'S VOW:

A PLAY, IN TWO ACTS.

BY T. F. WILKINSON, ESQ.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY W. COOLE, LUMLEY COURT,
No. 401½, STRAND.

[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

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PRICE SIXPENCE.

Dramatis Personæ.

BELINUS, Chief Druid

ETHRED, his Friend

IGNOMER, a Warrior

1st. DRUID

2nd. DRUID

1st. CHIEF

2nd. CHIEF

3rd. CHIEF

IDUNA

ALFAIDA

DRUIDS, DRUIDESSES, SOLDIERS, &c.

I D U N A.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Forest. Front of a Druid Cabin.*

Enter BELINUS *and* ETHRED.

Bel. How like a woman in her beauty's wane,
Declining Summer sets forth all its charms!
The changing leaves send forth a warning voice
And whisper wisdom in the ear of Age.
Nature denies fruition to my wish,
That scatters, out of season, seeds of Spring;
When Winter's icy grasp must soon destroy
The cherished blossoms of untimely Hope.

Eth. All Wisdom's wishes lie within her reach,
For nought she covets unattainable.
What madness, then, disturbs thy tranquil hours,
The placid evening of a stormy life,
With restless passions and perplexing cares?
Fortune, through life, that led thee by the hand,
Hath throned thine age upon the rock of power;
What more remains? Enjoy that thou hast won,
And care but to maintain it.

Bel. I'd give all
The dear-bought glories of eventful years
For what they cannot purchase. Oh! my friend,
Love, in each stage of human life a torment,
In ours ridiculous,—love is my curse.

Eth. Wilt thou contend with boys for precedence
In woman's mirthful eyes? Banish the thought!
Wisdom shall rule thine age; let headlong youth
Pursue blind Folly through the amorous maze!

Bel. Art thou a Druid, and reputed wise?

I tell thee, passion rules not only youth
 But life in all its changes. To the world
 'Tis like the wind, which, in its gentleness,
 Sports on the mead and dallies with the rose ;
 But, roused to fury, oaks deracinates,
 And strews the beach with shipwreck. Wherefore,
 then,

Tell me, each age hath its appropriate passion ;
 That sports accord with boyhood, love with youth ;
 That manhood courts ambition, age repose ;
 Since nature, not volition brings the change,—
 Nature, whose hand the shining zodiac turns
 And shows the signs in season? order divine
 Is marred at times : then, in the world without,
 What havoc and confusion! Even so,
 'Tis with the world within.

Eth. Well I know
 How useless to advise. I will aid thee.
 Whom dost thou love?

Bel. Iduna!

Eth. Oh! my chief,
 Recall the word! Banish the impious thought!
 Think on the dreadful vow that binds us all!
 Think on the name I may not speak, the spell
 Which shakes the mighty stone untouched, the blood
 That hath been shed thereon!

Bel. I think of all—
 The unutterable vow ; that blood stained stone!
 But Woden and his worship I reject :
 The Queen my goddess more divinely shines!
 The obstacles are mighty : what of that?
 Swoll'n torrents, yawning chasms, shattered rocks,
 Which stop a dwarf, a giant overstrides.
 I know my power, let others know my will ;
 She shall recant her vows. To pacify
 The people, Woden shall be pacified
 With human sacrifice ; the victims, those
 Who dare oppose religion and our word.

Eth. Yet, by thy artifice betrayed, the Queen
 To the god Woden plighted virgin vows.
 Wherefore was this, since, beyond precedent,
 Thy perilous policy will cancel them?

Bel. Because she loved, and would have crowned
Ignomer.

I, regent, during the minority,
Sent him against the Iceni, in command,
Then spread report he had in battle fallen.
In black despair Iduna sought the grove,
And vowed herself a Druidess, but soon
The truth was known. Ignomer lived a hero,
And claimed his royal bride. The Druids, urged
By me, resisted him. Iduna mourned.
Nor since that time have I the proof obtained
That they have met. The Druids' dreadful vow,
If broke, consigns her to the living tomb.

Eth. Ignomer hath achieved a name in arms,
And adoration courts the rising sun ;
Beware, lest while thy policy contrive,
His promptitude may execute. He leads
Our bravest warriors ; and the din of arms
Still drowns the voice of old established rule.
When once their hands the sword and sceptre sway
Not long the priesthood may withstand their power.

Bel. I am as on a mountain all of sand,
Nor resting place the perilous steep affords,
'The cloud-capp'd summit valour must attain,
Or to swift ruin baffled hope descend.
Decided counsels only can avail ;
Aid me with all thy wisdom, all thy love.

Eth. Quell with religious fear the public mind !
Portents shall strike and prophecies appal !
Let Woden's image clash its horrent arms,
And dreadful voices terrify the night !
People and Queen confound with priestly arts !
Employ Ignomer ever in the field,
On distant wars. Thyself here present, watch
Occasions time will offer.

Bel. Time ! yes, time,
Youth, like a prodigal, doth scorn ; but age
Doth cherish, as we hold a friend most dear
When soon to part. Yes, I will watch for time,
On whose untiring wings occasion rides ;
Now to the sacred grove. The Druids wait,
And Britain, from the god, shall learn her fate. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Woden's oak in the centre of the consecrated grove.*

Enter ALFAIDA conveying an infant wrapped in a mantle.

Alf. This is the hour and the appointed place,
By Woden's oak. Where tarries Ignomer?
I dare not wait; discovery is death.
Beneath the umbrage of this sacred tree
I leave thee, tender blossom. This fair oak,
Now monarch of the grove, was once as weak.
Mayst thou, like it, by the god's fostering care,
With head high-towering and deep-rooted sway,
Around the horizon on all sides extend
The branches of dominion! which shall yield
To millions that protection now thou need'st!
Thus, not deserted, under Heaven I leave thee.
[*Exit, leaving the child.*]

MUSIC.—*Enter BELINUS, ETHRED and DRUIDS.*
They encircle the tree.

Bel. Some cursed foot hath trod the labyrinth,
And profaned Woden's grove. Behold!

1st. Druid. A babe!
Whom needy parents hath abandoned.

Bel. What! see ye not our order's mantle here?
Whence be these dire imaginings which shake me?
Spread vengeance on the blast thy dragon wings
And make mankind thy prey.

Eth. Woden provides himself a sacrifice.
I hail the omen.

Bel. Ha! a sacrifice!
The hungry fires burn pale for lack of blood,
Their roaring utters "Sacrifice." Take hence
The child as a burnt offering to the god!
A sacrifice! a sacrifice! Proceed!

SONG.

*Hail to the oak! the forest king!
The glories of the oak we sing!
Hail to the oak, our native tree,
The type of British Majesty!*

[*The Druids, while chanting, march and counter-march about the oak, led by Belinus.*]

*No tree can, like our oak, defy
The fury of the wintry sky ;
While round our island tempests roar,
And ocean thunders on our shore.*

*As our ancient rite commands,
With heart devout, and holy hands,
The sacred mystletoe divide,
From the oak's parental side.*

*As 'tis written in the book,
'Tis severed with a golden hook ;
Thus, with prophetic garland, now
We bind, great chief, thine awful brow.*

[*A Druid cuts the mystletoe with a golden hook ; it
is wreathed into a chaplet with oak, and placed,
by two Druids, on the head of Belinus.*

*Let Britain's destinies appear,
In visioned prospect to the Seer !
Now future glory, future woe,
Your shadows on the present throw.*

[*Druids fall back R. and L., leaving Belinus C.*

Bel. What clouds are these, dark, rolling all
around ?

Ha ! lightnings send them ! crashing thunders sound !
I see on Dover's cliffs the British host ;
Their scythed chariots crowd the sea-beat coast.
Fronting our cliffs, what canvass walls arise !
What towering masts, in forests, pierce the skies !
Near as they come, swift eagles fly before,
And shouts exultant quell the billows' roar.
Nations on nations seek our destined coasts ;
Fleets follow fleets, and hosts succeed to hosts.
Thus, through long ages, war's red torch shall burn,
And new invaders vex the land in turn ;
Till the appointed days, when at the word
Of Peace, the nations sheath the slaughtering sword,
All names in one confounding ; from that hour
Shall march on British land no foreign power ;
But civil to invasive war succeeds,
Still woes augment and yet Britannia bleeds.
A tree, a thousand years of storms withstood,
By Freedom planted, fertilized with blood,
Shall to the sky uplift its towering head,
And round the world its kingly branches spread.

Then walls of oak shall from the deeps ascend
 Our sea-girt homes with lightning to defend ;
 Volcanic clouds involve the Heavens around
 And mighty thunderings quell the vast profound.
 What wond'rous visions now in prospect rise !
 What suns of glory blind my dazzled eyes !
 Concord, the thistle with the rose combines,
 'The mystic shamrock in the garland twines,
 Decks with the triple wreath Britannia's crest,
 And 'neath her ægis bids the nations rest.

[*The DRUIDS close round BELINUS. Scene closes on them.*]

SCENE III.—IDUNA'S Cabin.

Enter IDUNA and ALFAIDA.

Idu. From yonder ancient elm, whose spreading boughs

Shelter our cabin, where in summer heats
 The linnet wont to chirp with cheering notes,
 This live-long day the doleful raven bodes.
 I dread some dire mishap. My child ! my child !
 Life of my life, dear pledge of dearest love,
 Sweet innocent, abandoned and exposed ;
 For thee I fear ! no selfish tremors find
 Unroyal harbouring in my bosom. Say
 How could'st thou leave him ?

Alf. The child is safe, ,
 And cradled under Woden's sacred tree ;
 None but our order know the labyrinth,
 Or dare invade the grove, except Ignomer,
 Who, ere this, doubtless, hath embraced his son.

Idu. How comes it there he met thee not ?
 Ignomer !

If thy sworn love prove false, the living tomb
 Shall receive the wretched, lost Iduna
 In welcome refuge from detested life.

Alf. Ignomer's love is worthy thine. Remember
 How tried his faith, his noble heart how true !

Idu. Love's confidence is like a rocking-stone,
 A touch may shake it, but a giant's might
 Avails not to o'erthrow its equipoise.

Alf. Let the loud sounding harp and sacred hymn
Dispel this cloud, that darkens on thy soul.

Idu. Alas ! those days of happiness are past,
When, to the sweet chords of the golden lyre,
My raptured bosom thrilled responsively.
Past joys, by contrast, aggravate my woes ;
So, when black night upon the landscape falls,
Which, viewed by day, with varied beauty glowed,
Mysterious horrors shroud with spectral gloom
And fearsome shades involve the altered scene.

Alf. Yet melody, that charms the feasts of gods,
Can chase the cares which mortal hearts oppress :
Music, like honey dropping, soothes sharp grief,
To melancholy and tender musings ;
The mind recovers by degrees its tone,
Till, rising with the strain to extacy,
While sweetly vibrate the resounding wires,
The raptured bosom glows with heavenly fires.

Idu. I cannot to thy love refuse the strain ;
Come, mournful harp, assist me to complain.

IDUNA'S SONG.

*Where Severn rolls his bounding stream
Whose scythed wheels like lightning gleam,
What hero on his rattling car
Thunders amid the ranks of war ?*

*Hark ! loudly on the shaking ground,
His courser's clanging hoofs resound ;
The fierce Icenî view with fear
The flashing terrors of his spear.*

*Does there the god of battle ride
Refulgent on yon car of pride ?
No ! 'mid the spears my flag I see,
The flag Ignomer had from me.*

*Victory, my rival's flushing charms
Her greenest laurels, brightest arms
Allure him by the Severn's side
To keep him from his lonely bride !*

[*Enter* IGNOMER.

Ig. Iduna !

[*Embrace.*

Idu. Ignomer.

Ig. Oh! might this bliss endure, and at this hour
Eternity arrest the wings of Time!

Idu. In this embrace be all my woes forgot!
Fear cannot reach me in my hero's arms.

Ig. Show me our son!

Idu. Haste to Woden's oak!
Away! for life! our infant lies beneath it.

Ig. I left the grove but now, and saw Belinus,
Attended by his Druids, at the oak.

Idu. Our child is lost! is murdered! Hold me not!
[*Iduna attempts to quit the cabin; they detain her.*
I'll go. I will embrace his knees. Belinus!
My crown is thine! restore my child.

Alf. Thou ravest. Remember the tremendous
doom—

The living grave—the dreadful lingering death!

Idu. I care not.

Ig. I will to them, by the gods!
And with the grey-bearded impostors' blood
Deluge their broken altars. If, oh, Woden!
Thou dost delight in human sacrifice,
Then direful vengeance shall I glut to-day;
Blood only mediates between kings and treason.

Alf. Ignomer! madman! hold! Thy single sword
Cannot protect her. The attempt is ruin,
And gives the crown he covets to your foe.
Haste to thy troops, and march with thousands down,
To rescue and avenge. They come; conceal thee.

[*Music plays, and becomes louder as it approaches;
then knocking. Ignomer retires.*

Idu. Whatever thou seest, or hearest, do not move!
Maternal love supports me, and my heart
Meets them with strong defiance. Welcome fathers;

[*Alfaida opens. Enter Belinus, Ethred and Druids.*
Alfaida, before our honoured guests
Set forth what cheer our humble cabin holds,
Welcome shall mend deficiencies.

Bel. Accept
Our thanks, fair Queen; but feasting ill assorts
These days of doubt and danger. Prophecy
Points to them as a crisis big with fate.

Omens of evil wait on sacrifice,
 And wrath divine impends upon the land.
 Religious rites forgot, or dreadful crimes
 Concealed from human justice outrage Heaven.
 This to discover, late we sought the grove
 In Woden's worship, where, beneath his oak,
 A sleeping infant lay. No feet but ours
 Can pass the labyrinth. A Druid hailed
 The omen, and pronounced that the god
 Provided for himself a sacrifice.
 This night we give the victim to the flames.
 Be thou the priestess.

Idu. Horrible to think !

To act accurst ! Can murder please the god ?
 The barbarous butchery of an innocent child ?
 Then let the god's own image feed the fire,
 And seek we other worship.

Bel. Remember

Thy vow, nor dare thus impiously deny
 Great Woden's justice or provoke his power.
 Time immemorial hath beheld his altar
 Reeking with blood of human victims. Why
 May not this infant share the fate of thousands ?

Idu. The victims ever have been enemies
 Taken in battle, or for heinous crimes
 Condemned by law. There is no precedent
 In custom or religion for the act
 Thy cruelty would perpetrate.

Bel. Know, Queen !

'Tis mine, chief of the Druids, to declare
 The mysteries of our tremendous worship ;
 Thine to obey the gods in me their priest.

Idu. Their works proclaim them good. Look up
 to Heaven !

Thy knowledge tracks the stars ; learn wisdom
 thence !

If not, then know, our royal will opposed,
 Shall frustrate thy design.

Bel. Thy Druid vow

Abrogates, in religious rites, thy power.
 Resistance is in vain. It is not ours
 To know the principles which rule the world ;

But this we know ; to appease wrath divine
Altars were raised of old and victims slain.

Idu. This omen is not rightly understood.
Did Woden doom the infant to destruction,
He had not cradled it beneath his oak.
If days of doubt and peril be at hand
Rather believe this Heaven-sent child may prove
A champion from the gods to save his country.

Bel. If the gods sent him, why the gods can save
him.

No more dispute our will.

Idu. I must submit,
Not to thy will, but to disposing Heaven.
Tell me the place and time of sacrifice.

Bel. Before the image of our warrior god ;
When heavy slumber seals observant eyes ;
When sable night's slow meeting clouds extend
O'er the wide Heaven their star-spangled veils,
And the broad moon our mystic circle fills
With glooming lustre suited to the rite.

Idu. I will be there to meet thee. Now farewell.

[*Exeunt* BELINUS and Druids, each making an
obeisance to IDUNA. IGNOMER quits his
concealment.

Ig. Most miserable mother ! to what act
Hast thou, in madness, yielded an assent ?

Idu. Our child is in their power, our only hope
To lull suspicion. My Ignomer, haste !
Moments are life. If here we part for ever,
The gods with all their choicest blessings crown
thee !

Live for our infant ! my love ! my husband !

Ig. Now, by the gods, the great destroyer Death
Shall not divide our love ! I will not leave thee.
My single sword, so oft in battle proved,
Can rid us of this traitor priest.

Idu. Not so.

Think on the flames of Woden's horrid altar !
Our child devoted to the fire. Again,
Again embrace me ! How my woman's heart
Lingers about thee at this dreadful parting !

My arms refuse to loose their hold. Ignomer !
My love ! my all of hope, of joy ! farewell !

Ig. My heart should take the temper of my sword.
My wife ! my own Iduna ! I must leave thee
To battle with the terrors of the time.
Yet not for long we part : alive or dead
We shall be re-united. On thy throne,
Seated as Queen, thou shalt doom the traitor ;
Or in the sleep of death we'll rest together.

Idu. Farewell, my husband ! all the gods go with
thee !

I will not fear. Thou'lt come a conqueror,
And save thy wife and child ; but if I perish
Before thy succour, my last thoughts are thine ;
My dying comfort, that thou wilt endure
Life for our infant's sake. Teach him to love
His mother's memory ! Make him a king !
Watch over him with twice a parent's care ;
Then, all terrestrial duties nobly done,
Review thy well-spent life, and wait the time
To join Iduna in the land of souls,
Where blissful bowers she decks for thine abode.

Ig. I will do all. I must shed blood, not tears—
But nature will have vent. My wife ! my love ?

[*Falls on her neck.*

My coursers paw the ground. Life's in their speed !
The time forbids another look.

Idu. Farewell.

Ig. Farewell. [*Going, he returns.*

Yet, ere I mount my chariot, be the gods
Implored ; for human speed and human strength.
Valour or wisdom but by Heaven avail ;
Creative power, though unrevealed thy ways,
We own thy wisdom, and thy goodness praise.
I rush to war and leave my queen alone.
Oh, with thy thunders guard her life and throne !
Let victory bear her banner through the plain,
And give me glorious to her arms again !

A C T II.

SCENE I.—*A space in a circle of upright stones, in the centre a colossal image of Woden. A fire burning on an altar before it. A rocking-stone slowly moving in the back ground. The moon rising over it.*—IDUNA *sola*.

Idu. The hour draws nigh. A chill and clammy dew
Embeads my brow. My own voice startles me,
That only breaks appalling stillness round.
The stars, refusing to illuminate
Abhorred rites of Woden, have withdrawn
Behind dun clouds ; the few that far between
Peer forth as watchers in the dreary sky,
Diffusing crimson glare, look steeped in blood !
How dark the night is ! I shall be to-morrow
Where 'twill be darker ere this hour return.
Ha ! the grim Druids frown upon me ! Death
In grisly terrors scowls upon the brow
Of stern Belinus ! To the living tomb
His voice of thunder dooms me. A vast hand
Grapples me with terrible violence—
I contend vainly in the death struggle—
My limbs are crushed within the mighty grasp—
It drags me breathless through the yawning earth—
This is the pit of everlasting darkness !
My waning lamp emits a dismal glare
On the rude cavern's walls ; the scanty food,
Supplied in hate to prolong misery,
Exhausted fails, I parch, I burn with thirst.
Hark ! from the rocky confines of my tomb,
Abode of gaunt despair and living death,
My shrieks of agony re-echoing burst
With deafening din on my distracted brain !
Must I then perish thus ? Ignomer ! save me !
Save me, my husband ! my Ignomer, save me !
The vapours of the grave have maddened me
With dire reality and strong delusion.
My husband never more will hear my voice. [*Bell tolls.*
Hark ! 'tis the Druids call ! what shadowy form

Rises majestic from the ground ! It waves
 The sceptered hand and beckons me away !
 Father ! obedient to thy call, I come.
 Hence from my breast unkingly fears are flown,
 And resolution re-ascends her throne.

Enter BELINUS and Druids R.

Enter ALFAIDA, and Druidesses, and take place l.

HYMN TO WODEN.

*Night's dusky pinions overshadow the skies ;
 On Woden's altar bickering fires arise,
 And blood, warm streaming from the victim's heart,
 Shall to the flames a ruddier glow impart.
 Now in the slanted moonbeams rocks the stone,
 The midnight wind shall waft an infant's groan.
 When falchions clash, when loud the trumpets sound,
 And scythed chariots shake the trembling ground,
 Great Woden's power the valiant Britons aid,
 And Death and Conquest edge their crimsoned blades.
 Thus ever, Woden, Britain's cause defend !
 Prostrate before thy sacred shrine we bend.*

[All kneel to the Image.]

Bel. Bring forth the victim ! hew the limbs
 asunder !

Tear out the heart and entrails ! fling the trunk
 Into the fire !

[IDUNA rushes forward and snatches the child.]

Idu. Saved ! Saved ! within his mother's arms
 again !

Bel. What, shall the bastard fill the throne of kings,
 And Woden of his sacrifice be robbed ?

Thus I prevent it.

*[BELINUS attempts to seize the child—IDUNA
 snatches the knife from the altar and holds it
 to his breast.]*

Idu. Death is in thy path,
 Traitor, behold thy Prince ! Ye priestly butchers,
 Who by gross arts pervert the people's minds
 And bow their bodies before dire religion,
 Tremble, lest outraged Nature rise at once
 And antedate your doom.

*[ALFAIDA takes the child—the women encircle
 her to protect it.]*

Bel. Tear the child from them ! Hurl it in the flames !

Idu. Dare but attempt what thou hast dared command,

And fall a fitter sacrifice ! I, Queen,
Appeal unto the kingdom's laws. I stand
Before the burning altar of the god
And call him to attest, my Druid vow
Was by the vilest artifice extorted,
And binds me not. I was then betrothed
To Prince Ignomer. Ye are my subjects.
Who but the gods can judge me ? They acquit.

Bel. The law condemns thee to the living tomb ;
Nor will we take the victim from the god.

1st. Druid. But royal blood may not be sacrificed.
Captives and slaves the law allows as victims ;
We dare not harm the infant.

2nd. Druid. Let the laws,
To which Iduna hath appealed, decide.
Our holy rites are broken. See thē fires,
Obscured with smoke, are smouldering on the shrine,
The stone hath ceased to move ! Woden is wrath,
And thus rejects the victim.

Bel. Let them both
Descend accursed to the living tomb !
Of broken vows the doom inviolate.
So from our country we avert the ire
Of the insulted gods. Druids, give place !
The sun upon the guilty must not rise ;
And, ere she quit this upper world for ever,
We would hold secret conference. [*Exeunt all but*
Iduna ! BELINUS and IDUNA.
Can this be real, or a dreadful dream ?

Idu. I have no words for thee, my doom is spoken :
I would the dreary interval were past
That lies between me and my living tomb.

Bel. Aye ; but so young to leave the joys of life !
My eyes, estranged to humanity,
Hardened well nigh to stone with horrid sights,
Yield, like a bitter well, tears long forgot.

Idu. I thought thy heart was like the granite rock.

Bel. The rock hath fountains ; when I look on thee

My anger changes into tenderness;
Fain would I save thee, if thou wilt be saved.

Idu. Palter not with my numbered moments. Say,
What hast thou to impart?

Bel. Where is Ignomer?
He should be here in arms to save his wife.
Unworthy of thy beauty and thy love,
Where lurks the coward in thy perilous hour?

Idu. Silence, calumniator! my husband
Is true as thou art false. Traitor begone!
I read thy cunning; with feigned sympathy
Thou think'st to win my confidence, and learn
Ignomer's purposes. Then know thus much—
They are worthy of him. Would'st demand more?
Question thy oracle. I die thy victim.

My husband living shall avenge my wrongs;
The gods who have deserted me protect him.

Bel. My deeds shall prove my words sincere;
I'll save thee,

Albeit my fame must suffer. Tell me only,
Wilt thou requite my care—my tenderness—
My—my—more than all, my love?

Idu. What meanest thou?

Bel. Fairest of women, in my heart
Thy radiant image long hath been enthroned;
I doom thee not, but wait my doom from thee.
Darkness and terror from thy beauty fly,
As mists disperse before the glorious sun,
Like a bright spirit spurn the yawning tomb,
And shine refulgent on the throne that waits thee!
Indignant scorn is flashing in thine eyes;
Nay, answer not, till thou hast heard my suit!
Reject me not till I have paid my vows!
For years of silent anguish grant me moments!
Think on the mighty love which hath subdued
Belinus thus! Think on my fame, my power,
The glorious prizes of a life of honour,
Cast at thy feet for love! Scorn not my age;
For 'tis thy beauty which hath humbled it.
Thy beauty changes wisdom into folly;
Thy beauty turns my power to feebleness.
Speak but one word of hope, and live and reign!

Idu. But that I hold thee mad I could reply
With words of anger. Subdue this folly !
Think of me as thy queen ! Think of my husband,
And merit first forgiveness, then our trust.

Bel. I would not woo by fear, but time compels.
The Druids wait upon our conference,
And, ere the sun shall rise upon the earth,
One way thou must decide.

Idu. The stars grow pale,
As lingering in their orbs to view my doom,
Which day may not behold. If might and right
The gods conjoin, and me my sceptre give ;
In his own fires shall Woden's image burn,
And thou, his priest, with all thy Druids round,
Shalt feed the ravens, hanged upon his oak.

Bel. Think on the living tomb that yawns for thee !
Thou meetest not death, in the embrace of love,
With weeping friends around. Thou must descend
Alive into the grave ; darkness and famine,
In all their terrors, there await thee. Think
Upon thy infant, when from thy exhausted breast
It drains the life blood : then no ear but thine
Can hear its cries. Dire madness seizes thee ;
And, furious with famine, like a wolf,
Thou tearest the tender limbs and quaff'st the blood.
Gorged with the horrid meal, sleep comes on thee—
Thou wakest—reason is restored—where
Is thy infant ! Distracting memory
Recalls the past. Is it a dreadful dream ?
Ha ! horrid relics prove it true. No more
Fancy can follow dire reality.
Thou art mine.

Idu. My child ! my innocent child !
Devoted to the living tomb ! you cannot
Perpetrate crime so horrid. Let me die !
I will not murmur at the stern decree,
But spare my child !

Bel. Be mine, the child is safe,
And thou art queen. By arms and policy
I will subdue the nations to thy sway,
Till to thy sceptre every knee shall bend
Within the seas of Britain :

Idu. Tempter ! Traitor !
 Yet every insult I forgive. Take all,
 My crown, my life, but spare my child !

Bel. Decide !

Idu. Oh mercy ! mercy ! at thy feet
 I, born a queen, now fall a suppliant.
 Rescue my infant from this dreadful death.

Bel. Thus let me raise thee from the ground ! Hence-
 Reign in my heart. Let others supplicate ! [forth
 It fits my queen and Britain's to command.

Idu. Away ! thy hands pollute me. Royalty,
 Lost to itself, may well be mocked by others.
 Death is the general doom. I will not fear
 The horrors thou hast conjured to unnerve me ;
 Smiling I'll pass the portals of the tomb,
 My infant at my breast ; the mortal struggle
 Will soon be past, and, in the land of souls,
 A blest existence we will lead together,
 While from the place of torment rise thy howlings.
 What ho ! ye judges ! executioners !
 Priests ! Druids ! ministers of Woden ! come !

[*Enter Druids and Druidesses.*

Bel. Lead to the vault !

Idu. Farewell, oh world, for ever !
 Fresh air, that blowest on my brow, farewell !
 Stars, that career in glory through the Heaven,
 Farewell ! woods ! vallies ! hills and plains !
 Farewell ! to light and life farewell for ever !
 My husband ! my last thoughts are thine ! Thy image
 Shall shed a glory through the sepulchre.
 Come with thy mother, infant of our love !
 And spirits of the earth, in your abodes,
 Receive me and my child !
 I stand between the living and the dead,
 And light prophetic dawns upon my mind.
 Oh ! Eastern star, long promised, quickly rise
 With kingly beams to glad benighted skies ;
 That power supreme may reign with love divine,
 And rescued nations hail Salvation's sign ! [*Exeunt.*

[*MUSIC.—Druids go first with torches as leading to the
 vault ; then IDUNA, followed by ALFAIDA, with the child,
 BELINUS follows with the rest. Scene closes on them.*

SCENE II.—*A plain. Sunrise.*

Enter Chiefs with pages bearing their Shields.

1st. Chief. Know ye why thus Ignomer summonses.

The chiefs of Cantium here to meet in arms?

2nd. Chief. Some say a Gallic power hath yester-Landed at Dover : others the Iceni [night,
Are marching hitherward.

3rd. Chief. I heard Belinus had proclaimed himself
The king of Cantium.

1st. Chief. Belinus, say ye?

2nd. Chief. Oh ! 'twas blind policy in the old king
To leave to that ambitious priest the charge
Of state affairs in the minority.

3rd. Chief. Hark ! to Ignomer's trumpet !
Trumpets sound a march, a flourish of drums and martial music.

2nd. Chief. See his van
Emerges from the forest.

1st. Chief. Let us haste and meet him on the
march ! [Exeunt.

SCENE III.—*A Campaign country.*

Enter IGNOMER with forces.

[The word "Halt" is given without, as to different divisions, a scythed chariot placed in the centre.
IGNOMER mounts it to harangue the troops.

Ig. Give the word halt throughout ! Well met
in arms, [and men
Brave chiefs. Now Heaven and earth, and gods
Attest my words ! Close round my chariot,
And hear the cause of war. The queen Iduna
Is, while we speak, devoted to the tomb.
Her crime alleged, breach of holy vows.
But know, my friends, by artifice betrayed,
She joined the Druids, being then betrothed
To me. This, her first vow, precludes the second.
She thought her husband dead, she found him living.
Yet more, the child of our chaste wedded loves
Is destined, as a demon sacrifice,
To be consumed by fire on Woden's shrine,

Belinus with his Druids thus decree.
 First, holiest, mightiest of all vows is marriage ;
 Cursed be priestcraft, cursed policy,
 Which fight against this vow, which tear asunder
 The links that bind society ! How long
 Will Britons bear oppression so abhorred,
 That bondsmen born, thus outraged, would revolt.
 To arms of freedom turn tyrannic chains,
 And dash with them the weaponed despots down !
 'Tis not my cause alone ; 'tis every husband's,
 'Tis every man's, who has a heart and hand
 To fight the battles of defenceless woman,
 And infancy, whose inarticulate cries
 Call from high Heaven Almighty vengeance down !
 Then march ! though great the curse of civil war,
 That of domestic tyranny is greater.
 March, in the cause of womanhood and childhood !
 March ! for the queen, for freedom and for Britain !

[*Shouts.* Death to the traitors !

Ig. Grief and doubt away !

Vengeance alive must rule our mind to day,
 High in the chariot at my side shall stand,
 And, smiling, view the slaughters of my hand.
 The scythes, swift whirling right and left, shall tear
 A mangled passage through the groaning war.
 Resistless mow down routed ranks around
 And flood with gore the carnage-cumbered ground.

[*Exeunt.* Scene closing on them.

SCENE IV.—*Synod of the Druids beneath an oak.*

Enter BELINUS, ETHRED *and* Druids, *with warriors and people.* BELINUS *seats himself beneath the tree.*

Bel. Your wisdom never more was needed fathers,
 For foreign and domestic clouds impend.
 The throne is vacant. Soon the neighbouring states
 Will cast aside reluctant fealty.
 Ignomer also breathing but revenge,
 Will shortly march his army hitherward.
 But for immediate danger I provide,
 And hold at hand an armed force. To you
 The task belongs to fix the government,
 And choose a man to be our king.

Eth. Fathers !

Where like Belinus can we find a king ?

On whom the gods their wisdom have bestowed ?

A weak unskilful pilot at the helm,

The vessel is the sport of winds and waves :

But, guided by a strong experienced hand,

It ploughs securely ocean's yielding tide.

Shouts. Long live king Belinus !

Eth. Countrymen !

Say have ye chosen Belinus for our king ?

Shouts. Long live king Belinus !

1st. Druid. Lift on high the golden band

And sword of justice !

[The sword and band are held up by two Druids before the people.]

Belinus ! wilt thou be the father of the people ?

Wilt thou maintain our laws and liberties ?

Wilt thou do justice alike to rich and poor ?

Wilt thou, in peace and war, by the gods' aid,

Govern with right and might ?

Bel. I will.

[The band is placed on his head, and the sword in his hand. Two Druids remove his mantle, and he appears in armour. Shouts.]

1st. Druid. In Woden's name thy brows are bound with power,

And thy right hand the sword of justice sways.

Bel. Since 'tis your will, my loving countrymen,

To yield to me the guidance of the state ;

Let wisdom, gods, and justice prop the throne,

And grant my reign and life may end at once

When Britain's good requires it !

[Trumpets sound without. Enter a soldier.]

[Music continues, and grows louder.]

Sol. Mighty sir,

Our chief hath sent me hither to report

Troops from the west with hostile mien approach ;

Even now our army issues from the camp,

And forms its line upon the heath to meet them.

Bel. 'Tis himself.

Prove me, our mutual faith this moment sworn.

[Enter another soldier]

2nd. Sol. The foe comes on apace. Chariots
and horse
Through dusty whirlwinds head the advancing host,
And by his flashing car and furious driving,
I know Ignomer foremost of the van.

[The noise without keeps on increasing.]

Bel. We'll profit by this rash precipitance,
And crush them in detail. On to the field !
There meet their chariots, as the dreadful reef
Receives the broken ship ! The battle joins !

[Shouting and clash of arms without.]

Hark ! to the hostile shout ! re-echo it
As if the thunder raised its dreadful voice
And shouted on our side ! Follow your king !

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V.—*Battle field.*

Enter IGNOMER, with soldiers.

Ig. Upon them, warriors ! Linger not for spoil !
Archers ! one volley ! then fling down your bows
And charge them sword in hand. The rest halt not
To launch your spears, but charge them home with me
Full on their centre. Charge ! Charge ! charge !

[Exeunt.]

*[Parties cross fighting. Then enter BELINUS, ETHRED
and soldiers.]*

Bel. Turn ! rally ! fight it out !

Sol. Fly ! fly ! fly.

*[Enter a soldier with a banner flying. BELINUS follows
him, and returns with the the flag as having slain him.]*

Bel. Thus death be ever in the coward's path.
Hear me, my friends ! another road remains ;
Through the loose files of yon advancing host,
Disordered in pursuit, dispersed for spoil.
This victim I devote to fear and flight
Whose influence passes from our ranks to theirs.

[Trumpets sound a rally.]

Hark ! a bold rally our loud trumpets sound,
And drums awake the thunders of the field !
Battles are lost not by the valiant slain,
But by the dastardly survivor's fears.
Resolve to conquer, and the field is won.
Follow your king to death or victory !

[Exeunt.]

SCENE LAST.—*Another part of the field. Monument.*
Enter BELINUS, ETHRED and soldiers.

Bel. I'll not survive defeat. Yet rally here !
 This monument affords us vantage. Ha !
 Ill-omened spot ! It is the sepulchre.
 We will not meet them here.

[Enter IGNOMER with soldiers.]

Eth. They come !

Bel. Yet one blow for empire.

Ig. Traitor ! surrender shall not save thy life.
 Die captive or in arms ! Die priest or soldier !

Bel. Presumptuous stripling,
 View in Belinus Britain's king and thine—
 This battle axe my sceptre, wherewithal
 I crush the towering head of foul revolt.

[They fight. IGNOMER forces the banner from BELINUS, who drops his battle axe. IGNOMER sets his foot on the banner.]

BELINUS renews the combat with his sword. BELINUS falls.
 I die the crowned victim of ambition.

Earth yawns retributive to drink my blood—

A gulf of darkness opens for my soul—

Oh ! had I died before ! I choke in blood—

Ignomer ! save her—pardon—there—the tomb.

[IGNOMER seizes the battle axe and bursts the gates of the sepulchre, descends and brings out IDUNA, insensible, with the child in her arms. Enter OMNES. ALFAIDA takes the child from IDUNA.]

Ig. Iduna ! my wife ! my Queen ! look up !

[IDUNA remains awhile insensible, then recovering, shrieks and embraces him.]

Idu. My husband !

Ig. Thus virtue triumphs ! O, ye deathless gods,
 Look down propitious from your bright abodes !
 Thus ever strike the sword from treason's hand,
 Preserve the queen and bless with peace the land.

Omnes. Long live the queen ! Hurrah !

[Body of BELINUS, in front, IDUNA R. C., IGNOMER L. C., ALFAIDA L., Druids R., Druidesses L., soldiers with banners in the rear, scythed chariots and the whole army of IGNOMER, in panorama, in the back ground.]

THE END.



